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NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

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DUNES IN DANGER

THE SOUTH SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN is a stage for dramatic action these days. As one travels east from Chicago, the smoke curtain lifts showing a backdrop of a five-mile stretch of undeveloped dunes. The play has been going on for geologic ages as glaciers pushed across, lake levels rose and fell, vegetation retreated and advanced, plants stabilized the dunes and were buried by them, and a host of animals made seasonal migrations across the stage cued by the atmospheric rheostat which dims the spotlight of the sun in winter and brightens it in summer.

THE NEXT ACT may be climactic rather than climatic. A new industrial city with its new deep-water harbor may rise between Ogden Dunes and Dune Acres Bulldozers and dredges will perform their modern miracle of earth-moving as a prelude to a ballet scene of cranes fashioning a steel spiderweb of angular patterns against the sunset. A chorus of midget houses, shoulder to shoulder, will spread outward in an expanding line where the dunes once stood. In the last scene as smoke settles down to the music of juke boxes and the clink of beer cans, almost-human figures will run erratically about until the more authoritative ones lock them up in the mental institution rising in the background.

> "In this continental conservation program, the practical aspect - the continuous use of our natural resources - is only of secondary importance. Its other values are infinitely greater: Our nature heritage is primarily there to be enjoyed, understood, and loved; for it is a unifying, all embracing bond, an heirloom of strength and beauty, a common possession in which American life is growing its deepest roots." -- E. L. Jordan

HAPPILY the next act may be quite different: A new Indiana organization, the Save the Dunes Council, has appeared on the stage; the Indiana Dunes Preservation Council is in action; and the Conservation Council of Chicago (see N.C.N. 2:2) may direct the play in place of those whose only goal in life may be industrial production and real estate development without adequate protection of natural areas for science, art, and recreation.

FEW HABITATS HAVE GREATER APPEAL to more people than do sandy shores fringed by hills of wind-whipped sand. Scientists, artists, philosophers, and the whole recreating public (who themselves have these professional talents more or less developed) all seek the shore and are rewarded.

THE BASIS OF THIS APPEAL is broad, too broad to span with written words. It involves the senses of the human animal. We revel in cool water slipping over sun-warmed skin, and in warm, dry sand playfully piled on our wave-cooled bodies. We sniff in the odors of sun on lakeside pines. We rejoice in the Botticelli curves of cirrus clouds far above the long horizon line as subtly curved as the lines of the Parthenon. Yellow against blue and light against dark, beach and bay show the most appealing contrasts of nature's palette.

BAH! says the self-styled realist who thinks that people gravitate to the shore in pleasant weather, only to watch each other and to play, never thinking to look for beautiful little creatures hidden in the jetsam of the driftline.

ACTUALLY the perception by the human senses grows by what it feeds upon. Our proudly literate public is not truly educated unless it can on occasion creep out from under its hood of industrial smoke and sharpen its eyes on distant stars seen through an unpolluted sky, or harken to a bird song far off beyond the dunes. Having a variety of experiences is part of maturing. City folk do not truly grow up, are not thoughtful citizens, unless they have opportunities to learn about nature by first-hand experience out of doors.

TO PROCURE INFORMATION about this land-use controversy of national importance, write to the Save the Dunes Council, Box 952, Ogden Dunes, Gary 5, Indiana.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY 1840 MINTWOOD PLACE, N. W. WASHINGTON 9, D. C.

NEWS FLASHES

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY will hold a business meeting on Monday, March 9, at 2 pm. in the Potomac Room of the Statler Hotel, Washington, D.C. This will be in connection with the meetings of the North American Wildlife Conference on March 6,7, & 8, at the same location. Hope you will attend!

"SUNKEN FOREST" on Fire Island, Long Island, N.Y. will be saved if an effort being undertaken jointly by the Nature Conservancy and Wildlife Preserves, Inc. succeeds. The Conservancy is campaigning for funds to purchase this area. Details will appear in the next issue of N.C.N.

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT defenders have scored a victory. National Parks Mag. reports Sect'y Chapman has recommended deferring consideration of Echo Park and Split Mountain dams until conclusive studies are made of feasible alternatives. This reverses his previous approval of these two large dams to be built in the Monument. . . Congressman Leroy Johnson of California has just introduced H.R.1307 to make Dinosaur into a national park.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK was enlarged by presidential proclamation on Jan. 6. The addition includes a 50 mile strip of Pacific Ocean front connected with the Olympic Mtns. by a narrow corridor along the Queets River. Also included is an area along the Bogachiel River extending into the Park for nine miles. This culminates the land acquisition program authorized by Congress in 1938 when the Park was established. It brings to completion this conservation undertaking that Theodore Roosevelt formally began when he established Mount Olympus National Monument on March 2, 1909.

KLAMATH-TULE dispute settlement was announced by Secretary Chapman on Jan. 9. The Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Nat'l. Wildlife Refuges, on the Calif. - Ore. state line, have for years been in danger from encroaching reclamation and homesteading. The refuges are considered most valuable of West Coast waterfowl areas. The Secretary's directive will open certain areas to homesteading but will protect the major portions. Provisions of the directive are said to be reasonable from the wildlife standpoint.

LAND GRABBERS are warming up for a big try. A few years ago some of the stockmen and lumbermen led an unsuccessful attempt to take over the public lands at give-away prices, and to wreck the Forest Service. They burned their fingers that time, but they are coming back with more tricks than before. Watch for action on this in coming months.

A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE will be held on March 25, 26, & 27 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. The Conference is being sponsored by the Ford Foundation through a special organization, Resources for the Future, Inc., 1625 Eye St., N.W., Washington 6,D.C.

WILDERNESS HAS A THIRD DIMENSION

How deep is the wilderness of the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota? 4,000 feet, according to the President's Executive Order that went into effect Jan. 1952. It prohibited airplanes from flying at lower altitudes over the area.

The United States District Court of Minnesota recently upheld the legality of the ruling by granting injunctions against parties who have been violating the order, maintaining that the Executive Order is within the powers given to the President by the Air Commerce Act of 1926.

The many of us who have never paddled and portaged into the international Quetico-Superior wilderness can be glad with those privileged people who have worked to penetrate those natural areas, sentient to the manifestations of undefiled wilderness. The depth of their feelings cannot be measured even though law can stipulate a 4000-foot ceiling under which private and commercial aircraft shall not intrude.

INTRODUCTION OF EXOTICS

FOREIGN SNAILS shipped to Ohio for fish bait are sometimes left lying along pond banks as possible sources of sinister spread, warns William Ingram in the July, 1952, issue of The Nautilus. Giving reference to a paper called "Snail Invaders" in the November, 1950, Natural History, by R. T. Abbott, the author points to the possibility that either of the species involved, Otala lactea and Cepaea hortensis, might become an agricultural pest whose control would necessitate increased prices to consumers of certain crops. It should also be noted that the introduced snails may well harbor parasites to which our native snails may have little resistance. Sportsmen's groups across the country should take interest in this threat to the ecology of their fishing areas. It should become as unsporting to fish with imported live bait as to shoot a sitting duck.

IN AUSTRALIA a virus disease called myxomatosis has recently dealt death to millions of rabbits which until now have multiplied phenomenally following their introduction into a land where natural controls were almost lacking. Pathologists expect the virus and the rabbits to steady down to a more balanced condition with the rabbit population at a lower, less destructive level. Mosquitoes and fleas are vectors of the virus which to date is known to attack only rabbits.

CONSERVATISM on the part of a parasite is very important when such biological control is tried. We hope that the myxomatosis virus will not start experimenting with other mammalian hosts. It must be noted that one's conservatism often depends on one's environment. Who can predict the feeding preferences of the Australian beetles introduced into the Pacific Northwest once they have built up their numbers by consuming the Klamath Weed which they were imported to destroy? We hope they will not turn to native plants.

CONSERVATISM on the part of game managers is also important when it comes to introducing species. Fortunately, in another corner of the continent, the proposed introduction of white-tailed deer into Newfoundland has been postponed because the Canadian Institute of Forestry and Game Management has opposed the idea because of lack of winter food for deer, the possible competition with moose, the doubt as to the effect of deer on forest practises, and other expected difficulties in managing deer.

BOOK DEPARTMENT

There are many fine natural history books published each year. We shall mention those which give important support to the Nature Conservancy's program. One is Hammond's Nature Atlas of America prepared by Dr. E. L. Jordan of Rutgers University with the assistance of a group of specialists in various branches of the natural sciences (C.J. Hammond & Co., New York. N.Y. $7.50, 1952.).

Not since the publication of the Naturalist's Guide to the Americas by the ecologists who laid the foundations for the Nature Conservancy has a volume appeared which should so lure people to seek out native beauty in its many forms. With highly readable, informative text accompanied by luminous and freshly original paintings, the book gives page after page of evidence of what a wealth of nature our country possesses. It seems to put to music much of the material so capably set forth in the now out-of-print Atlas of American Agriculture which dealt with our natural resources from a more economic viewpoint.

Only a small portion of the book is composed of maps; these stress government-owned areas such as national and state parks and forests and national wildlife refuges in one section, and in another part of the book ranges of selected species of wildlife and plants and of minerals. Yet the book is still worthy of the name "atlas" because of the orderly way in which minerals and mammals, birds and bugs are related to these natural areas comprising their habitats.

Three Books on Bird Habitats

A GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI. By Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press. 1951. xxi + 659 pp., illustrations by Geo. Miksch Sutton. $5.

For each of the 26 states covered there is a discussion of physiographic regions, biological communities, and other matters pertaining to the ornithology of the state. This is followed by descriptions of the bird-finding places. Information is given also on the museums and ornithological societies of the state. There is much of interest to the tourist and general naturalist as well as to the ornithologist.

WHERE TO FIND BIRDS IN MINNESOTA. Compiled by Kenneth D. Morrison and Josephine D. Herz. St. Paul: Itasca Press: The Webb Printing Company. 1950. xiii + 122 pp., spiral binder. $1.50.

A guide to 62 birding areas, parks, and sanctuaries. Similar to Pettingill's book but in more detail.

WHERE BIRDS LIVE: HABITATS IN THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES. Edited by Shirley A. Briggs and Chandler S. Robbins. Audubon Society of D.C., Box 202, Benjamin Franklin Station, Washington 4, D.C. 1951. 58pp., paper cover, $0.75.

This is a series of articles on habitat types by several writers. (Not a guide to actual areas.)

NOTABLE LOCAL CONSERVATION SOCIETIES

Conservancy members will often be humbled by what has already been accomplished in conserving nature in their home states. Our program is new only in its scope, its integration, and its orientation. In no state, however, is the job finished, even though what has been accomplished to date is admirable.

In some cases the work can best be continued by organizations already at work and needing only some additional support to produce greater results. In other situations it will require a new organization working hand in hand with those already active but absorbed in different phases of conservation. In either case, we must be well acquainted with our allies in order to achieve effective and friendly cooperation. Toward this end we present this series describing local organizations.

I. Massachusetts Forest and Park Association

Trees have been of paramount importance in the 54 years of conservation performed by this association. Trees not only are the natural clothing of this state in the eastern deciduous forest formation; they have also been woven into the pattern of each New England settlement, raising real estate values as well as exalting the spirit. Native or planted, trees have benefited from the many activities of the Association, including: Legislation in 1904 for a State Forester; legislation for the state fire warden act resulting in 51 lookout towers, for the law requiring towns to have tree wardens, for equitable forest taxation, and for the creation of national, state, and town forests and parks.

Concurrent with the legislation and carrying it along has been the educational work of the Association, for instance the Cape Cod Forest Fire Prevention Experiment, proving the value of education and control. Transplantation of the town forest concept from Europe to help create 127 town forests in the state has given a strong basis for conservation education, including current experiments in school camping. Land Economic Survey programs are basing rural planning on sound conservation principles. Education of citizens to the values of the elms cursed by the Dutch Elm Disease has been a major phase of the work. Very important in recent years has been the awakening of woodlot owners to the realization that through the Association-organized New England Forestry Foundation they can apply sustained yield management to grow wood on New England soil with a minimum of government regulation.

Merely to mention legislation and education stimulated by the Association is to neglect description of the actual activity of officers and members, of the work poured into projects with no end in sight. To learn more of the program of these experienced conservationists, one can receive the Forest and Park News and become a member by sending two dollars to the secretary at 3 Joy Street, Boston, Mass.

The Association recently completed a conservation land use plan for the Town of Groton Planning Board. The attractive booklet (Bulletin No. 175) presenting the plan might well be used as a model for similar activities by many other local conservation groups.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
1840 MINTWOOD PLACE, N. W.
WASHINGTON 9, D. C.
FORM 3547 REQUESTED

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of our organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

We, the members of the Nature Conservancy, invite you to join with us in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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NEWS FLASHES — See page 2

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THE PRESS TAKES NOTICE

The Milwaukee Journal gave good news to readers on November 10th as follows:

"Ten additions to the list of scientific areas in Wisconsin have been announced by Prof. John T. Curtis of the University of Wisconsin. These areas are being kept in their natural state for land research purposes.

"Curtis is chairman of the State Board for Preservation of Scientific Areas. There are now 16 of them, all in a condition similar to that prevailing in the area before the coming of the white man."

The New York Times on November 16th reported:

"Professor Curtis considers the preservation of scientific areas important so that biologists and land managers may be able to carry on research under conditions that are destined to disappear. It will be possible to protect some of the rarer plant species from eventual extinction. Professor Curtis points, as an example, to a newly developed insecticide known as "scabrin", a substance first discovered in a Western prairie sunflower so rare that scabrin must be synthesized. Plant geneticists may also find some of the rare species useful for creating valuable hybrids. 'Foresters can easily go fifty years in the wrong direction simply because it has not yet been possible to conduct a few research projects on land set aside specifically for that purpose,' says Professor Curtis."

* * *

Timber Topics published by Allis-Chalmers merrily reports in its August-September issue that:

"MICHIGAN LOGGER REMOVES ONE OF
LAST BIG HEMLOCK TIMBER STANDS".

The town of Eckerman probably does not know what it is losing to the remarkable power of five Allis-Chalmers crawler tractors. It could have been a trustee for the nation of an area which combines the values of a cathedral, a research laboratory, and a school. Who knows where the other last big hemlock timber stands in Michigan are located? Is any one of them so set aside that foresters can study how hemlocks fade away in natural conflict with the elements? Or must they all die in uneven battle with machines?

NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS is now edited jointly by John W. Brainerd, Springfield College, Springfield 9, Mass., and the Conservancy's secretary, George B. Fell, 1840 Mintwood Place N.W., Washington 9, D.C. You as a member or cooperator have the important task of sending in all possible information of interest.